

§ 281.1

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§ 281.1 General purpose and scope.

(a) These regulations govern the operation of the Food Stamp Program on Indian reservations either separately or concurrently with the Food distribution program. In order to assure that the Food Stamp Program is responsive to the needs of Indians on reservations, State agencies are required to consult with Indian tribal organizations about the implementation and operation of the Food Stamp Program on reservations. Also, under certain specified conditions Indian tribal organizations on reservations can administer the Food Stamp Program. The Act authorizes the Secretary to pay such amounts for administrative costs as are determined to be necessary for the effective operation of the Food Stamp Program on Indian reservations.

(b) The operation of the Food Stamp Program on Indian reservations is governed by all of the terms and conditions set forth in the Food Stamp Act of 1977 as amended and the regulations of this chapter.

(c) Additionally, under no circumstances shall any household participate simultaneously in the Food Stamp Program and the Food Distribution Program. Policy governing this prohibition is found in § 283.7(e).

§ 281.2 Administration.

(a) *Qualification.* (1) The appropriate ITO of an established Indian reservation will qualify for participation under the provisions of this part, when that ITO files an application which demonstrates the status of an area as an established reservation, unless FNS determines that such area(s) does not qualify as a reservation, as that term is defined in these regulations. For purposes of this part, established reservation means the geographically defined

area(s) currently recognized and established by Federal or State treaty or by Federal statute whereby such geographically defined area(s) is set aside for the use of Indians. Where such established areas exist, the appropriate ITO is presumed to exercise governmental jurisdiction, unless otherwise determined by FNS:

(2) The appropriate ITO for other areas, in order to qualify as reservations for the provisions of this part, must show to FNS:

(i) That the ITO exercises governmental jurisdiction over a geographic area(s) which enjoys legal recognition from the Federal or a State government and is set aside for the use of Indians.

(ii) A clear and precise description of the boundaries of such geographic area(s).

(3) Otherwise qualified areas for which the responsible ITO has requested operation of the Food Distribution Program alone in accordance with § 283.4, rather than concurrent operation with the Food Stamp Program, shall be exempt from the requirements of this part, and shall not be considered food stamp areas for any other purposes of this subchapter. Indian tribal households (households in which at least one adult member is recognized by the appropriate ITO as a tribal member) resident in these areas shall be ineligible for food stamp benefits. However, non-Indian tribal households resident in these areas may apply and be certified for food stamps at the State agency's certification office which would otherwise service the area. Otherwise qualified areas for which the responsible ITO has requested operation of the food distribution Program concurrently with the Food Stamp Program or areas within the reservation where FNS has determined that concurrent operation is necessary in accordance with § 283.3(b)(2) shall be subject to all requirements of this part and subchapter.

(b) *State plan.* In addition to the public comment requirements in § 272.2, the State agency shall submit for comment its service plans, and all other portions of the State plan that directly pertains to the operation of the Program for residents on the reservation

to the responsible ITO for reservations that qualify under paragraph (a) of this section. The ITO shall have 30 days to provide comments in writing to the State agency. The State agency shall, if appropriate and to the extent practicable, incorporate into its plans any suggestions made by the ITO. Additionally, the State agency shall administer the Food Stamp Program in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the Indians on the reservation, as determined by ongoing consultation with the ITO and by other means, regarding such areas of program operation as project area designation, operating procedures, locations and hours of certification and issuance, staffing and corrective action plans. The State agency shall maintain records of consultations on State plans and ongoing consultations held with ITO's for review by FNS. FNS shall study these records as part of reviews in accord with § 281.3 and Management Evaluation Reviews of the State agency.

(c) *Project area designation.* (1) An Indian reservation shall be designated as a separate project area or areas for the purpose of improving the accessibility of program services to Indians on the reservation unless:

(i) The State agency demonstrates to FNS that the size or population of the reservation does not warrant such designation;

(ii) The State agency demonstrates to FNS that the tribe can be adequately served by the existing or a planned project area because of the location of certification and issuance offices;

(iii) The State agency demonstrates to FNS that such designation would reduce the availability of certification and issuance offices; or

(iv) The State agency otherwise demonstrates to FNS that such designation would impair its Statewide administration of the Program.

(2) In the case where the Indian reservation boundaries cross State lines, the ITO and the appropriate State agencies may jointly request FNS approval that a single State agency administer the Food Stamp Program on all or part of the Indian reservation. A single agency of the State government would have to administer the Program

under the same terms and conditions applied to all other political subdivisions within its jurisdiction. An ITO designated as a State agency pursuant to § 281.4(d) would have to administer the Program under the same terms and conditions on all areas of the reservation.

(d) *Contracts with an Indian tribal organization.* The State agency may contract program functions to an ITO. These functions include, but are not limited to, outreach, preparation of bilingual materials on issuance. The State agency may also use the ITO in prescreening, translations, interpretive services and other noncertification functions. The State agency shall not contract responsibility for certification activities such as interviews or eligibility determinations. In all cases, the State agency shall retain full responsibility for program administration.

[44 FR 35925, June 19, 1979, as amended by Amdt. 207, 47 FR 52338, Nov. 19, 1982]

§ 281.3 Determination of failure.

(a) *Request for determination of State government agency failure.* FNS shall examine State agency administration of the Food Stamp Program on all or part of a reservation when requested by the ITO, the State agency or at FNS' discretion. When FNS determines that a deficiency in a State agency operation of the Food Stamp Program on all or part of an Indian reservation may be serious enough to warrant a review, FNS shall advise the State agency and the ITO in writing of the alleged deficiencies and of its plans to conduct the review and document deficiencies, if any are found. Subsequent to October 1, 1979 FNS shall complete these reviews within 90 days from receipt of an ITO's or State agency's request except under unusual circumstances such as the receipt of a large number of simultaneous requests.

(b) *Review—(1) Content of the review for State agency performance.* The review shall be designed to determine whether or not the State agency is properly administering the Food Stamp Program on a specific reservation. When an agency of State government is administering the Program on a reservation,